

(12) **United States Patent**
Dinh et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,254,949 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 9, 2016**

(54) **ANTI-SLIP CABLE TIE**

USPC 24/16 R, 16 PB
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
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U.S.C. 154(b) by 188 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **13/796,715**

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(22) Filed: **Mar. 12, 2013**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2013/0333164 A1 Dec. 19, 2013

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/659,620, filed on Jun.
14, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

B65D 63/08 (2006.01)

B65D 63/00 (2006.01)

H02G 3/32 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **B65D 63/00** (2013.01); **B65D 63/08**
(2013.01); **H02G 3/32** (2013.01); **Y10T 24/14**
(2015.01); **Y10T 24/1473** (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

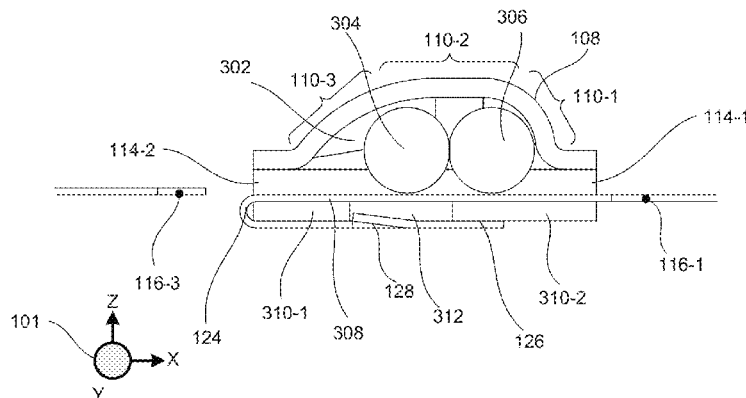
CPC B65D 63/1027; B65D 63/1036; B65D
63/1045; B65D 63/1054; B65D 63/1063;
B65D 63/1072; B65D 63/1081; B65D
63/1018; B65D 63/10

(57)

ABSTRACT

A cable tie includes a band having a first end and a second end
a housing, affixed to the band near the second end, with a first
opening to receive the first end of the band. The housing
comprises a first mass near the first opening and one side of
the housing, a stop mass near a second side of the housing,
and a second mass between the first mass and the stop mass.
When the first end is inserted into the housing, the second
mass prevents the first mass from moving a first distance
occupied by the second mass, toward the stop mass. When the
first end in the housing is being pulled out of the housing, the
first mass locks the first end in the housing and prevents the
first end from slipping over a second distance.

18 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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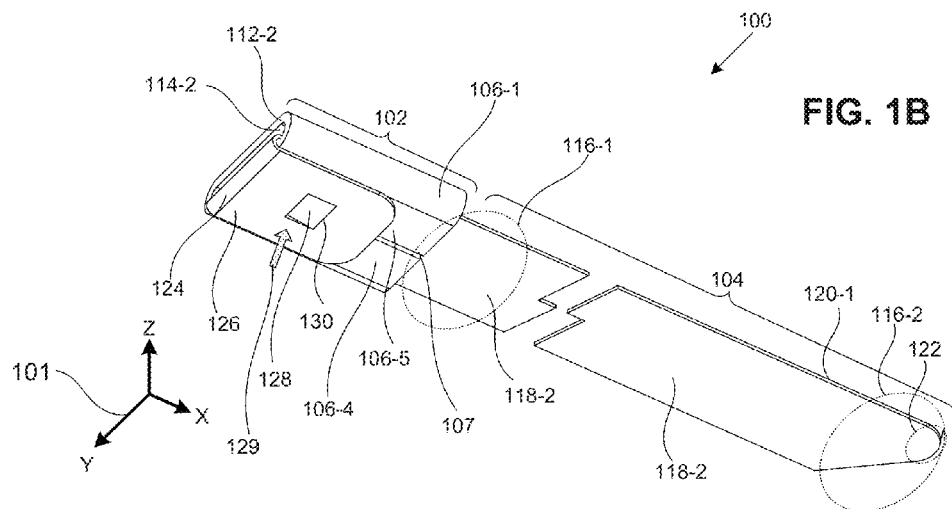
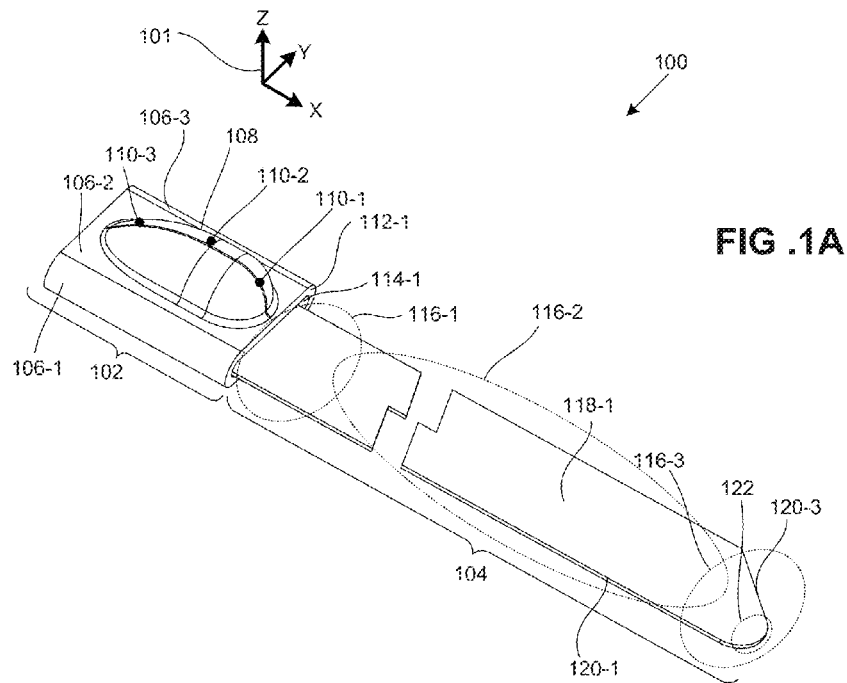
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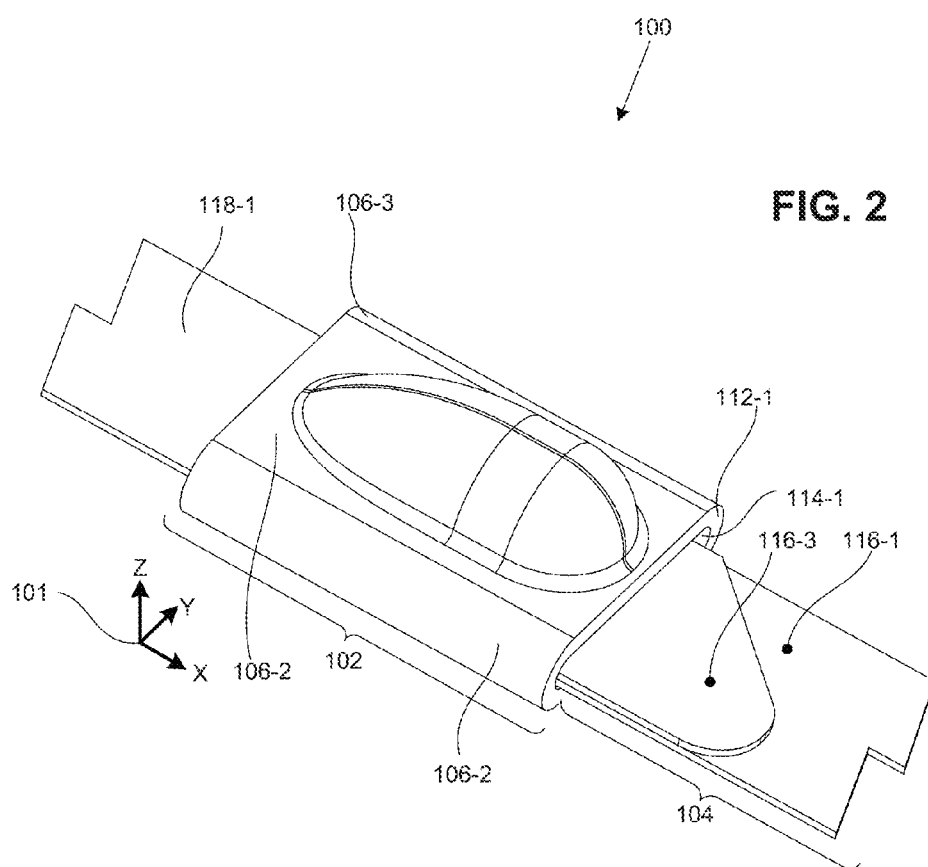
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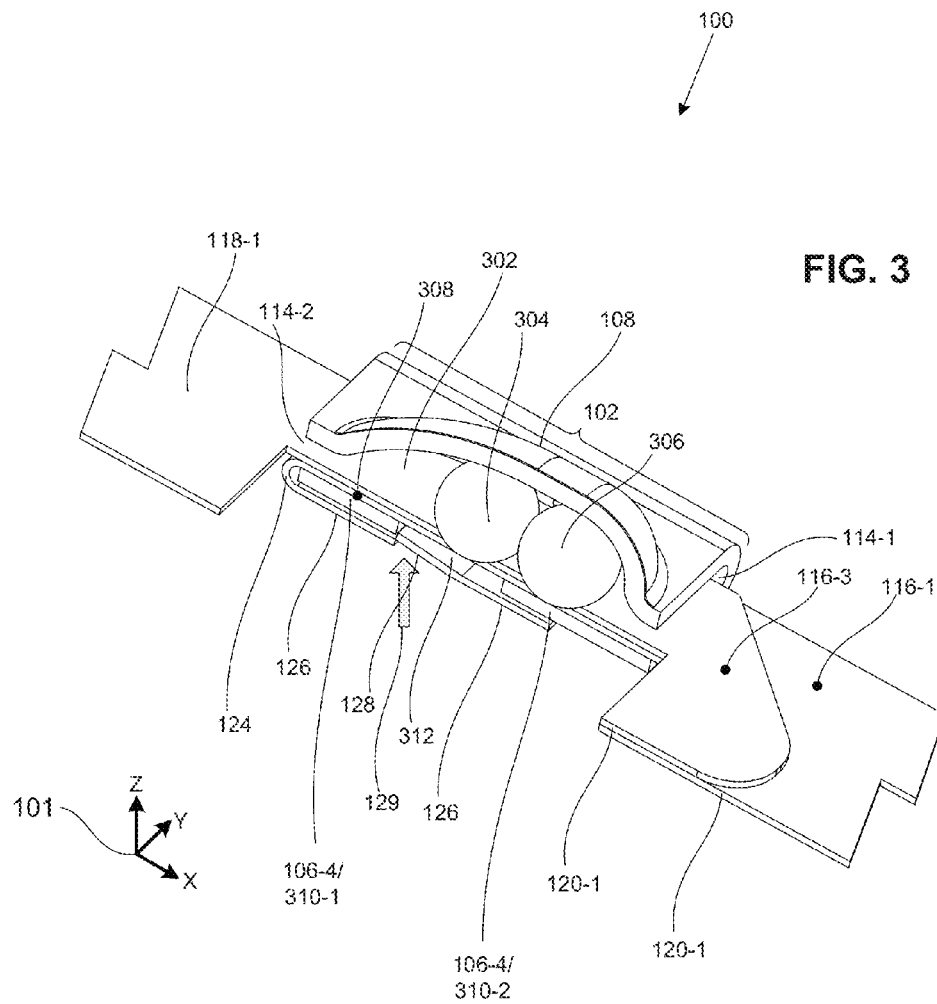
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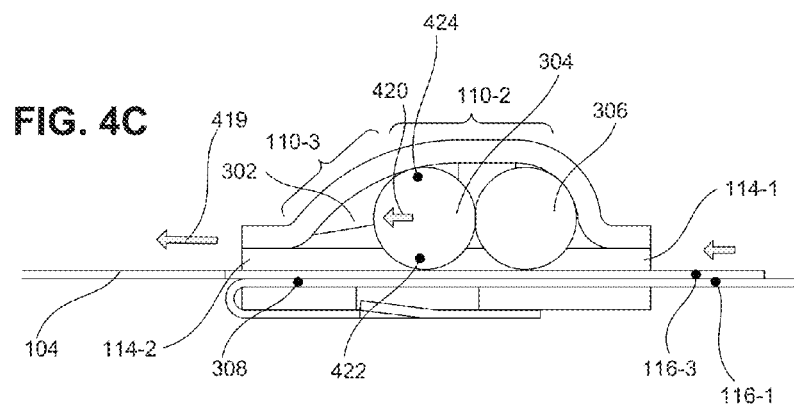
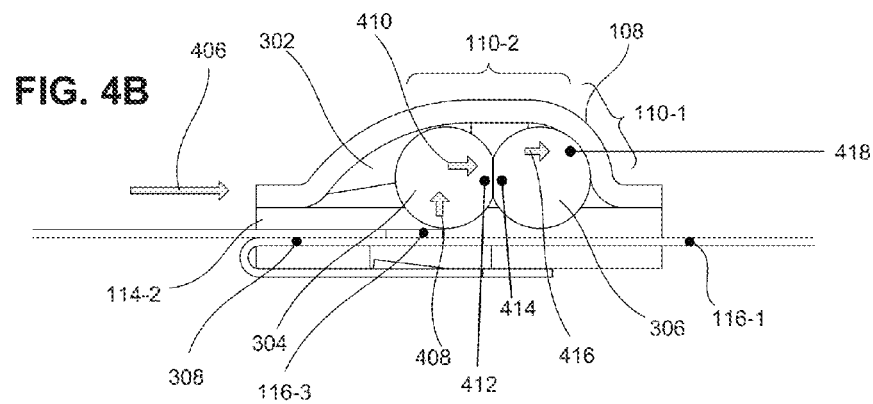
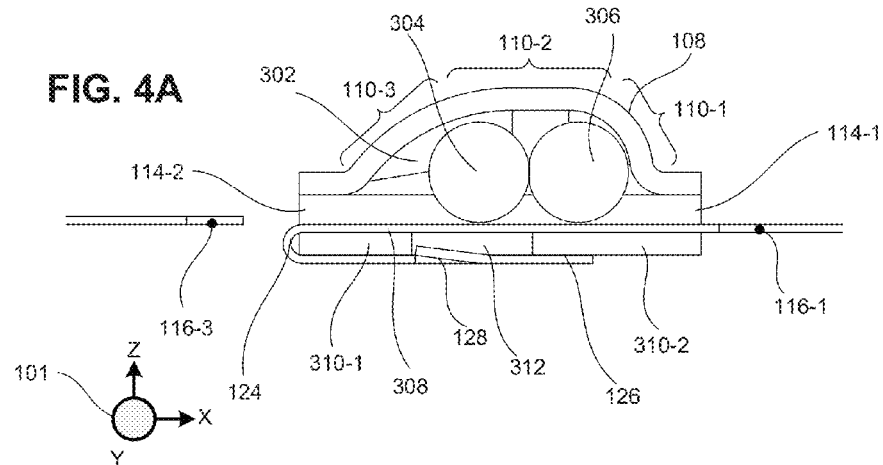
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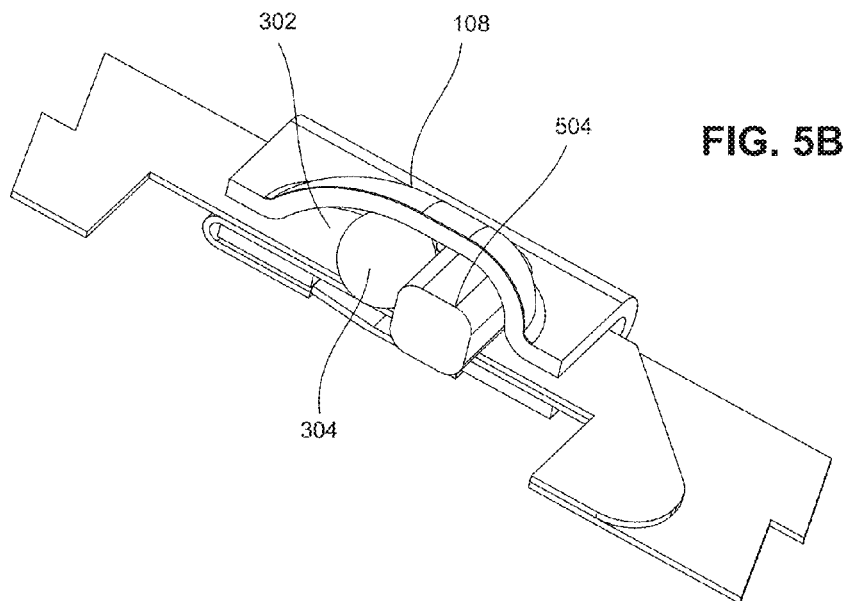
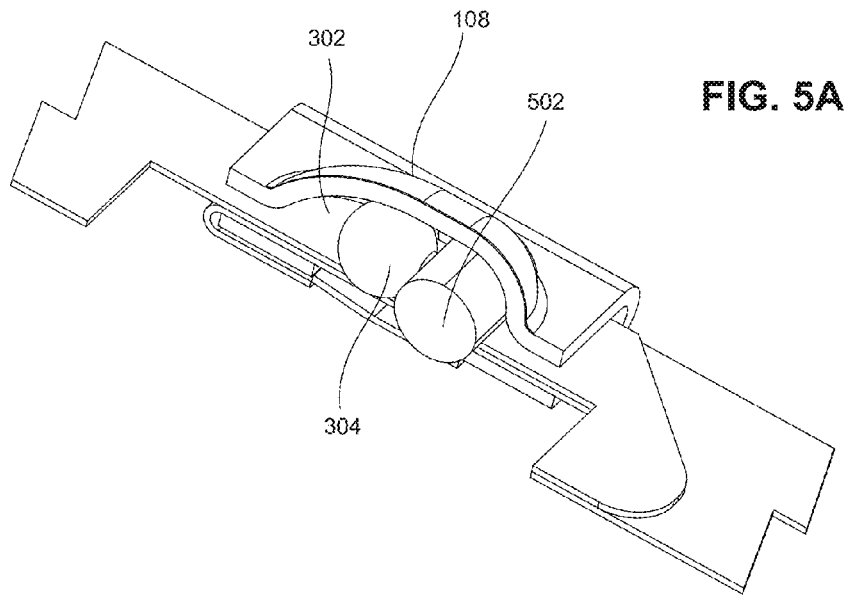
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ANTI-SLIP CABLE TIE**RELATED APPLICATION**

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 based on U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/659,620 filed Jun. 14, 2012, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A cable tie is used for fastening, binding, bundling, and/or organizing cables/wires. Different types of cable ties are made for use in different environments and applications. For example, some cable ties are made for outdoor use. Some cable ties are made for a specific industry, such as the food industry. Some are made for heavy-duty use (e.g., cable ties made of metal), for bundling large cables.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate one or more embodiments described herein and, together with the description, explain the embodiments. In the drawings:

FIG. 1A is an isometric perspective top/side view of an exemplary cable tie in an open configuration according to one implementation;

FIG. 1B is an isometric perspective bottom/side view of the cable tie of FIG. 1A in the open configuration;

FIG. 2 is an expanded isometric perspective top/side view of the cable tie of FIG. 1A in the closed configuration;

FIG. 3 is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of the cable tie of FIG. 1A in the closed configuration;

FIG. 4A is a cross-sectional side view of the cable tie before an end of the cable tie of FIG. 1A is inserted into a locking body of the cable tie;

FIG. 4B is a cross-sectional side view of the cable tie when the end of the cable tie of FIG. 1A is partially inserted into the locking body of the cable tie;

FIG. 4C is a cross-sectional side views of the cable tie after the end of the cable tie of FIG. 1A is inserted into the locking body and the cable tie is in the closed configuration;

FIG. 5A is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of the cable tie according to another implementation; and

FIG. 5B is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of the cable tie according to yet another implementation,

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The following detailed description refers to the accompanying drawings. The same reference numbers in different drawings may identify the same or similar elements.

As described herein, an anti-slip cable tie provides for a small/minimum slack in binding, fastening or bundling cables. To tie/bundle cables using the anti-slip cable tie, one end of a band, of the cable tie, that encircles the cables is inserted into the housing of a locking body of the cable tie. When the end of the band is inserted within the housing of the locking body, the band pushes a ball bearing within the housing toward an inner wall of the housing. Another ball within the housing, however, prevents the ball bearing from moving backwards beyond a point and bumping into the inner wall. When the band is pulled/tugged in the forward direction away

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from the inner wall, the ball bearing, being close to a front of the wall, prevents the end of the band from slipping and locks the band in place.

FIG. 1A shows an isometric perspective top/side view of an exemplary cable tie **100** in an open configuration according to one implementation, together with an xyz-axes **101**. As shown, cable tie **100** includes locking body **102** and a band **104**. In FIG. 1A, cable tie **100** is oriented such that band **104** extends along the x-axis of xyz-axes **101** and the unit normal vector of the flat surface of band **104** is parallel to the z-axis. Band **104** has an interior portion inside of housing **102**.

When band **104** is wrapped about cables and an end of band **104** (e.g., section **116-3**) is inserted within locking body **102**, locking body **102** prevents the end from slipping back out of locking body **102** and the band from unwrapping about the cables.

Locking body **102** includes a side wall **106-1**, a top wall **106-2**, a side wall **106-3**, bottom walls **106-4** and **106-5** (shown in FIG. 1B), and housing **108**. Walls **106-1** through **106-5** (collectively referred to as “walls **106**”) extend along the x-axis from a side face **112-1** to a side face **112-2** (shown in FIG. 1B). In one implementation, walls **106** may be made of one continuous strip of rigid material wrapped (e.g., loosely) about band **104**, such that there is a gap/opening **114-1** and gap/opening **114-2** (FIG. 1B) between walls **106** and band **104**.

Housing **108** includes a side portion **110-1** (also referred to as a “stop **110-1**”), a top portion **110-2**, and a side portion **110-3** (collectively referred to as “portions **110**”). As further described below, portions **110** are configured/shaped to enclose and interact with elements within housing **108**, to prevent a portion of band **104** (which was inserted through opening **114-1** and **114-2**) from sliding out from housing **108** when anti-slip cable tie **100** is in the closed configuration. In FIG. 1A, housing **108** is in the shape of a dome, and may be made of steel, plastic, or another suitable material.

Band **104** includes an entrance section **116-1**, a middle section **116-2**, and an end section **116-3**. Band **104** also includes a side edge **120-1**, a front edge **120-2**, and a side edge **120-3** (not shown). In one embodiment, side edge **120-1** and front edge **120-2** form an acute angle, such that, along the side edge **120-1** and parallel to the x-axis, the end of band **104** tapers to a tip **122** that can be more easily inserted into a gap/opening **114-2** (see FIG. 1B) after band **104** is bound around cables/wires, to result in a closed (loop) configuration. The end of tip **122** may be rounded, so that a user may not easily and accidentally puncture oneself with tip **122**. In one embodiment, when band **104** binds/bundles cables/wires, bottom surface **118-2** (FIG. 1B) of band **104** may face the cables/wires and be in contact with the cables/wires. Band **104** may be made of flexible material, such as steel, or another material.

FIG. 1B shows an isometric perspective bottom/side view of cable tie **100** in an open configuration, together with an xyz-axes **101**. FIG. 1B illustrates a number of features, of cable tie **100**, that are not shown in FIG. 1A. For example, FIG. 1B shows side edge **112-2** with gap/opening **114-2**. FIG. 1B also shows band **104** extending from entrance portion **116-1** into locking body **102** (along the negative x-axis) and exiting from locking body **102** via opening **114-2** to form a clip **124** with a flap **126** that covers bottom walls **106-4** and **106-5** in the direction of the x-axis. As shown, clip **124** and flap **126** are integrally formed with band **104**. In a different implementation, clip **124** and flap **126** be constructed separately from band **104** and then affixed together via screws or another mechanism.

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As shown in FIG. 1B, flap 126 includes, in one embodiment, at about the middle of its surface, a tab 128 with a crease 130. Bottom walls 106-4 and 106-5 above tab 128 has a hole (e.g., a square hole whose front edge is aligned with a front edge of tab 128) (not shown in FIG. 1B). Tab 128 is thrust upward in the direction of arrow 129 into the hole, bent about crease 130 (e.g., in the direction of the z-axis).

In this configuration, side walls 106-1 and 106-3 of locking body 102, clip 124, and tab 128 hold/affix a portion of locking body 102 to an interior portion of band 104, with the bottom surface 118-2 of band 104 being flush with an interior surface (the surface within locking body 102) of bottom walls 106-4 and 106-5 and the top surface of flap 126 being flush with the exterior surface (the surface in the -z direction) of bottom walls 106-4 and 106-5. Side walls 106-1 and 106-3 prevent the interior portion of band 104 from moving laterally in the negative/positive y-direction with respect to locking body 102. Clip 124, which is integral to band 124, prevents locking body 102 from sliding in the negative/positive x-direction relative to the interior portion of band 104. Tab 128, having been pushed into the hole in bottom walls 106-4 and 106-5, catches an edge of the hole when an external force is applied to locking body 102 relative to the interior portion of band 104 in the positive x-direction. Tab 128 and the hole prevents locking body 102 from sliding in the x-direction relative to the interior portion of band 104.

FIG. 2 is an expanded isometric perspective top/side view of cable tie 100 in the closed configuration. In FIG. 2, end portion 116-3 of band 104 has been inserted into gap/hole 114-2 formed at side wall 112-2 of locking body 102, and passed through and out of locking body 102 via gap/hole 114-1, resulting in the closed configuration. In the configuration, a section/portion of band 104 (e.g., end section 116-3) overlaps with entrance portion 116-1 of band 104. In FIG. 2, bottom surface 118-2 of end section 116-3 would be in contact with the top surface 118-1 of entrance section 116-1.

FIG. 3 is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of cable tie 100 in the closed configuration. FIG. 3 shows a number of features that are not visible in FIG. 1A through FIG. 2. As shown, housing 108 encloses space 302 in which a ball bearing 304 and sphere 306 are placed. In one implementation, ball bearing 304 may be made of metal (e.g., steel) and sphere 306 may be made of elastomeric or another material (e.g., plastic, rubber, sponge-like or spring-like material, stainless steel sponge, etc.). In the implementation illustrated in FIG. 3, ball bearing 304 and sphere 306 may have approximately the same diameter. In other implementations, the diameters may be different.

FIG. 3 also shows entrance portion 116-1 extending into housing 108 as an interior section/portion 308, which joins dip 124. In the closed configuration, interior section 308 is underneath end section 116-3 and above bottom walls 106-4 and 106-5. In FIG. 3, bottom wall 106-4 is illustrated as having front area 310-1 and a rear area 310-2. Between front area 310-1 and rear area 310-2 is a rectangular/square hole 312, into which tab 128 protrudes in the direction of arrow 129. As explained above, an edge of tab 128 engages an edge of square hole 312 if housing 108 is pushed/pulled in the x-direction relative to interior section 308, and prevents housing 108 from sliding in the x-direction relative to interior section 308 (e.g., prevents housing 108 from detaching from interior portion 308 of band 104).

FIGS. 4A through 4C are cross sectional side views of cable tie 100 at different stages of closing cable tie 100 into a loop. FIG. 4A is a cross sectional side view of cable tie 100 before end section 116-3 of band 104 is inserted into locking body 102 via gap/opening 114-2 to be in the closed configuration.

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Like FIG. 3, FIG. 4A shows ball bearing 304 and sphere 306 occupying space 302 of housing 108.

FIG. 4B is a cross sectional side view of cable tie 100 when end section 116-1 of band 104 is partially inserted into locking body 102 of cable tie 100. In FIG. 4B, after band 104 is wrapped about a bundle of cables/wires, end section 116-3 is pushed in the direction of arrow 406 via gap/opening 114-2 into housing 108. Consequently, end section 116-3 overlaps with interior section 308. As end section 116-3 moves further in the direction of arrow 406, section 116-3 pushes ball bearing 304, causing ball bearing 308 to move in the direction of arrow 408, such that section 116-3 may slide underneath ball bearing 308. In addition, section 116-3 also pushes ball bearing 304 in the direction of arrow 410, causing an area 412 on ball bearing 304 to contact an area 414 of sphere 306. Although the force on area 414 pushes sphere 416 in the direction of arrow 416, because area 418 of sphere 416 is in contact with stop 110-1 (or the interior surface of side portion 110-1) of housing 108, sphere 306 moves, in the direction of x-axis, little or no distance. Accordingly, sphere 306 prevents ball bearing 304 from moving further in the direction of arrow 410 and touching stop 110-1.

FIG. 4C is a cross sectional side view of cable tie 100 after end section 116-3 of band 104 is inserted into locking body 102 and cable tie 100 is in the closed configuration. In FIG. 4C, having been inserted fully into housing 108, end section 116-3 overlaps with entrance section 116-1. From this position, if band 104 is pulled in the direction of arrow 419, the frictional force between band 104 and ball bearing 304 causes ball bearing 304 to move in the direction of arrow 420 to the extent that there is space/clearance in space 302. Because space 302 within housing 108 is tapered in the negative x-direction, as ball bearing 304 is driven in the direction of arrow 420 until ball contacts the surface of portion 110-3 (also referred to as "stop 110-3"), area 424 and 422 of ball bearing 304 exert increasing force on the interior surface of portion 110-3 of housing 108 and on the top surface of end section 116-3 of band 104, respectively. The downward force exerted by area 422 of ball bearing 304 on end section 116-3 may pinch end section 116-3 between ball bearing 304 and interior section 308, and thus prevent end section 116-3 from retreating back in the direction of arrow 410 through gap/opening 114-2. That is, ball bearing 304 provides for the locking mechanism of cable tie 100.

As briefly discussed above, in a different embodiment without sphere 306 in space 302, when end section 116-3 is inserted into housing 108, end section 116-3 may cause ball bearing 304 to move all the way (or significant portion of the way) to stop 110-1 of housing 108. With ball bearing 304 in such a position, if band 104 were pulled back in the direction of arrow 419 (e.g., due to the weight of cables that are bound by cable tie 100), as end section 116-3 moves in the same direction relative to housing 108, ball bearing 304 would also move from the stop 110-1 of housing 108 toward the interior surface of portion 110-3 of housing 108, until ball bearing 304 locks end section 116-3, and, therefore, band 104. The distance covered by ball bearing 304 until ball bearing 304 locks band 104 is approximately the amount of slippage of band 104 allowed by cable tie 100. The slippage may result in an undesirable amount of slack in band 104 when cable tie 100 is in the closed configuration, with band 104 wrapped about cables/wires.

In contrast, with sphere 306 in place as illustrated in FIGS. 3, 4A, 4B, and 4C, ball bearing 304 cannot move in the direction of arrow 410 when end section 116-3 is inserted into housing 108 (or can only move a small amount). Hence, when band 104 is pulled in the direction of arrow 419 (e.g., by the

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weight of the cables that are wrapped by band **104**), ball bearing **304** cannot travel a significant distance until ball bearing **304** locks band **104**. In other words, sphere **306** prevents band **104** from slipping, and thus creating slack between band **104** and the cables bundled by cable tie **100** (e.g., slipping distance < the distance occupied by sphere **306** (e.g., the diameter)).

FIG. 5A is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of cable tie **100** according to another implementation. In this implementation, cable tie **100** includes, in place of sphere **306**, a cylinder **502**. Cylinder **502** may play a role similar to that of sphere **306** in the implementations described above.

FIG. 5B is an isometric cut-away perspective top/side view of cable tie **100** according to another implementation. In this implementation, cable **100** includes, in place of sphere **306**, a block **504**. Block **504** may prevent ball bearing **304** from allowing undesirable slippage of band **104** when band **104** is closed around cables/wires, in a manner similar to that described above for sphere **306** (e.g., by occupying a space between ball bearing **304** and stop **110-1** of housing **108**).

The foregoing description of implementations provides illustration, but is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the implementations to the precise form disclosed. Modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings or may be acquired from practice of the teachings. For example, in some implementations, housing **108** may be shaped differently than that illustrated in FIGS. 1-5B. Furthermore, in some implementations, more than a single sphere **306**, cylinder **502**, or block **504** may be placed within housing **108** to prevent ball bearing **304** from “sloshing” and allowing slippage of band **104** in the closed configuration. In some implementations, in place of sphere **306** or cylinder **502**, or block **504**, a spring or spring-like component may be placed in housing **108** to prevent slippage. Furthermore, depending on the implementation, a different type of band **104** may be used in place of band **104** (e.g., thicker band, narrower band, etc.). In still other implementations, top surface **118-1** of band **104**, the interior surfaces of housing **108**, and/or ball bearing **304** may include ridges to increase the friction between top surface **118-1** of band **104**, the interior surfaces of housing **108**, and/or ball bearing **304**.

Although different implementations have been described above, it is expressly understood that it will be apparent to persons skilled in the relevant art that the implementations may be modified without departing from the spirit of the invention. Various changes of form, design, or arrangement may be made to the invention without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Therefore, the above mentioned description is to be considered exemplary, rather than limiting, and the true scope of the invention is that defined in the following claims.

It should be emphasized that the term “comprises/comprising” when used in this specification is taken to specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps or components but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components, or groups thereof.

No element, act, or instruction used in the present application should be construed as critical or essential to the implementations described herein unless explicitly described as such. Also, as used herein, the article “a” is intended to include one or more items. Further, the phrase “based on” is intended to mean “based, at least in part, on” unless explicitly stated otherwise.

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What is claimed is:

1. A cable tie comprising:

a band that extends lengthwise from a first end to a second end;

a housing, affixed near the second end, with a first opening to receive the first end of the band when the first end of the band is brought toward the housing in a loop, wherein the housing comprises:

walls that enclose a space and have a stop toward the first end of the band;

a ball in the space; and

a mass placed in the space and between the ball and the stop;

wherein when the first end is inserted into the housing in an insertion direction, the first end passes under the ball and the mass and exerts a pull on the ball toward the mass,

wherein, after the first end has been inserted into the housing and when the first end is being pulled out of the housing in a direction opposite the insertion direction, the ball is wedged in the housing and locks the first end in the housing before the first end slips a second distance in the direction opposite the insertion direction the first end is pulled, and

wherein, when the first end is locked in the housing by the ball, the ball is prevented by the mass from moving a first distance occupied by the mass in the space, toward the stop and from moving into a position where the first end can slip toward outside the housing.

2. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the second distance is less than the first distance.

3. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the mass includes one of:

a box, a sphere, or a cylinder.

4. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the ball comprises steel.

5. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the mass includes one of:

plastic; rubber; sponge-like or spring-like material; or stainless steel sponge.

6. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the walls includes:

a first side wall about one side edge of the band;

a second side wall about the other side edge of the band;

one or more bottom walls covering a bottom surface of the band, and

a top wall, over a top surface of the band, that includes a dome defining the space,

wherein the first side wall, top wall, second side wall, and bottom wall are wrapped around the band near the second end,

wherein each of the walls extends from a first side facing away from the first end to a second side facing toward the first end of the band, and

wherein the first and second sides are perpendicular to the line from the first end to the second end, and include the first opening and a second opening, respectively, formed by the walls wrapped around the band.

7. The cable tie of claim 6, wherein the second end of the band extends from the second opening away from the first end, folds over the bottom walls, and forms a flap.

8. The cable tie of claim 7, wherein the bottom walls include a hole,

wherein the flap includes a tab that bends into the hole, such that when the housing is pulled along the line toward the first end, an edge of the hole abuts the tab to prevent the flap, the second end, and the band from being pulled apart from the bottom walls and the housing.

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9. The cable tie of claim 6, wherein the dome comprises a front portion toward the second end of the band, a rear portion away from the second end of the band, and a middle portion adjoining the first portion and the second portion,

wherein the space defined by the walls tapers toward the second end of the band such that as the ball moves toward the second end, the space becomes narrower to increase a frictional force applied by the ball on the first end and lock the band to the housing.

10. The cable tie of claim 1, wherein the first end of the band is tapered.

11. The cable tie of claim 10, wherein the first end is rounded.

12. A cable tie comprising:

a band having a first end and a second end;

a housing, affixed to the band near the second end, with a first opening to receive the first end of the band, wherein the housing comprises:

a ball near the first opening and one side of the housing;

a stop mass near a second side of the housing; and

a mass between the ball and the stop mass,

wherein, after the first end has been inserted into the housing in an insertion direction and when the first end in the housing is being pulled out of the housing in a direction opposite the insertion direction, the ball is

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wedged in the housing and locks the first end in the housing to prevent the first end from slipping over a second distance in the direction opposite the insertion direction the first end is pulled, and

wherein, when the first end is locked in the housing by the ball, the ball is prevented by the mass from moving a first distance occupied by the mass in the space, toward the stop mass, and from moving into a position where the first end can slip toward outside the housing.

13. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the second distance is less than the first distance.

14. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the mass includes one of:

a box, a sphere, or a cylinder.

15. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the ball comprises steel.

16. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the mass includes: an elastomeric material; or a stainless steel sponge.

17. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the first end of the band is tapered.

18. The cable tie of claim 12, wherein the band includes steel.

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